Tanner Tyson

Global Studies

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Term Paper

**Impact of World War II on the Countries Involved**

World War II was one of the most devastating wars in global history. Germany, Japan, Italy, England, the Soviet Union and the United Sates were all impacted in similar and different ways. Each country had to overcome great obstacles in the years following the war. **World War II impacted these countries in more ways than people realize. It impacted their population, infrastructure, industries/economy, and their people.**

World War II started when Germany invaded Poland in 1939. Due to this, England and France declared war on Germany. Benito Mussolini then decided to align Italy with Germany because he agreed with Hitler’s views, and was afraid that if he didn’t, then Hitler would eventually take over his country. The Soviet Union did not want to join in the war, but was forced to when Hitler invaded them.

While all of this was going on, the United States was neutral. This was until President Roosevelt directed aid to England. However, the US didn’t officially join until 1941 when Japan attacked the US naval base at Pearl Harbor. Roosevelt referred to the day of the attacks as “a date which will live in infamy.” At this point, these seven countries engaged in what became known as World War II.

**Italy**

In 1939, Italy’s population totaled 44,394,000 people. After World War II, they totaled 301,400military deaths, 145,100 civilian deaths, and 8,000 Jewish holocaust deaths. In all, 454,500 people died during the war years in Italy. That is 1.02% of their population, which isn’t too bad compared to other countries involved, but it is still a lot of people.

The war also impacted Italy’s infrastructure. Towns were severely destroyed, and the destruction up and down the country’s peninsula was horrific. Supply lines to their armed forces were decimated, leaving the troops very short on supplies. Small territories to the Northwestern part of Italy were taken and given to the Slavs to govern. Virtually every acre of the Italian empire was taken away.

Italy’s economy was left in bad shape after the war. The country was financially ruined, as one would expect. Not only did they have to spend money on their military and its supplies, they also had to rebuild much of the country after the war ravaged much of it. So, this meant that they had little money left for other needs such as government owned businesses and such.

The people of Italy, as one would assume, were also greatly affected. However, there weren’t as many negative scenarios as in other cases. Of course, they had to rebuild and mourn the losses of their friends and loved ones, but there were some positive notes. One was that the country wasn’t split up, but instead it remained unified. Also, their people were allowed free elections of new political leaders. Third, since Italy was not occupied by the Soviets, the people weren’t enslaved or raped, and the country was not pillaged or looted.

**Germany**

Nazi Germany’s (entire Third Reich) population as of the year 1939 was 83,988,000 people. After the war was over, the Third Reich’s population decreased by about 8.04% to 10.1%, or between 6,756,700 and 8,456,700 people in all. Included in that total were 5,533,000 military deaths, between 998,700 and 2,728,700 civilian deaths, and 225,000 Jewish holocaust deaths.

As a result of the heavy bombing that this region faced during the war, the towns and cities were reduced to nothing but huge piles of rubble. Highways and railroads throughout the region were destroyed, causing massive food shortages. The conditions were so bad that after the war, it took three days to travel the 776 kilometers from Munich to Hamburg. This normally took about an average of six hours and fifty-three minutes.

Like many of the other countries that were involved in the war, Germany’s economy suffered. Many of the industries were affected because many factories were destroyed. Jobs were tough to find because barely any of the businesses that existed before the war were no longer. In order to help people make some money, volunteers were hired to help clean up the rubble at a rate of ten cents per hour. Many people took advantage of this opportunity because they had no other choice if they wanted to provide for themselves and their families. There also was the issue of hyperinflation. Prices throughout the country rose 85% for a year, starting in December of 1944 before the war ended.

Many people were affected as well. First and foremost, the Allied victory ended the Nazi regime, alleviating the citizens’ fears of them. Second, they were not allowed to own anything that had a swastika on it. Third, they had to go through the process of denazification. People of high authority jobs and many responsibilities had to convince the Allies that they were not Nazis. Also, the Soviet Union didn’t return all POWs until ten years later in 1955. However, the biggest change was that the country was split into two different countries, East and West Germany, for the next forty-six years.